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ABSTRACT

Reputational and pluralistic methods of community analysis differ; their findings, conclusions, and philosophies are frequently at variance. Reputationalists find an economically dominated power elite. They picture a community's power and influence structure as pyramidal -- the power elite forming a monolithic power pyramid. Thus, according to reputationalists, only a select few run the affairs of the community. The pluralists, on the other hand, assume that influence is specialized and that people act primarily in areas of major interest. Consequently, for pluralists, no single group dominates the community, and those people who are influential in one sector of public activity tend to be noninfluential in another. However, both schools of thought agree on one fundamental point: very few citizens actually participate in the community's decisionmaking processes. (Author)

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COMMUNITY POWER AND INFLUENCE STUDIES: TWO POSITIONS

May, 1970

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....1

The Problem.....2

Stratificationists--Reputational Antecedents.....2

The Reputational Approach.....7

Reputational Critiques.....10

The Pluralistic Approach.....13

The New Haven Study.....16

Issue Analysis Limitations.....21

Summary.....23

Bibliography.....29

Introduction

There are over 90,000 local governmental units in the United States. School districts currently account for approximately 18,000 of this total. These school districts are political and legal entities, civil sub-divisions of the state, and quasi-municipal corporations. A vast majority have been provided with considerable autonomy for operation of the schools. Boards of Education as policy-formulating bodies generally have powers and responsibilities allowing them to function somewhat independently of other governmental agencies.

Although school boards do enjoy relative autonomy, many different types of pressures are operative in boards' decision-making processes. Pressures are exerted from state and national sources and particularly apparent today are the myriad pressures emanating at the local level. In effect, community needs, desires, expectations, and vested interests exercise considerable influence on boards of education and their administrative officers.

Various publics at the local level now are vitally concerned with educational matters. This concern is legitimate and understandable. Today's school official is extremely vulnerable to external pressures from the school system's publics because educational policy and decision-making activities are political actions. To believe otherwise in these times is naivete that will bring chaos to public education. Obviously, then, there is a great need for school people to identify, characterize, and understand the varied activities of influence groups. Such need is reinforced by realistic recognition of the sometimes practical necessity to appease articulate,

influential groups and to reflect in decision and implementation the needs, desires, expectations, opinions, and interests of various publics.

Due to increasing community involvement and concerted efforts to fulfill the American dream of meaningful education for all youth, there is growing recognition of the importance of community power considerations in the governance and administration of the public schools.

The Problem

Studies and research efforts directly or indirectly concerned with community decision-making and influence patterns are numerous in the several disciplines included in the social sciences. Sociologists and political scientists have given much attention to power structures. These researchers have been joined by philosophers, anthropologists, social psychologists, students of industrial management, and scholars in other disciplines including, to a limited extent, educational administration.

The many research endeavors in community analysis have resulted in two rather dichotomous views of power structure and influence patterns. These divergent philosophies, known as "reputational" and "pluralist," stem primarily from the work of two researchers, Floyd Hunter and Robert Dahl. The attempt herein is to explain the differing orientations to community in terms of the methodologies, philosophies, and findings of these two scholars with some consideration of earlier studies.

Stratificationists--Reputational Antecedents

Students of stratification centered their efforts on the question of social stratification or social level and resultant effects on man's social and environmental relationships with his fellow man. The social layers or strata in specific environments became focal points for what are called

stratification studies." These studies were the direct antecedents to the type of reputational study of community pioneered by Floyd Hunter.

As noted by Knezevich, stratification analysis, or the idea of probing the social class and power structure in American communities, began in the late 1920's and early 1930's, with the work of the Lynds.[1] Robert and Helen Lynd studied Muncie, Indiana, and their work still is generally regarded as a classic in the field. The Lynds concluded that power and influence in Middletown (Muncie) was concentrated in the hands of established families, called the "old elite." Accounts of their work were reported by the Lynds in Middletown, and, Middletown in Transition.[2]

According to Lynd and Lynd, private business was the dominant institution in the local community, and this finding still is widely quoted today. Of particular interest is the fact that the Lynds were among the first to describe a community power elite and the manner in which economic power may be utilized in daily decision-making.

William Lloyd Warner's monumental five-volume study of "Yankee City" was another well-known analysis utilizing stratification methods. The five volumes presented the Warner team's findings from observations of the operation of the class system in Newburyport, Massachusetts, a town of 17,000 people. The "Yankee City Series" was published under the titles, The Social Life of a Modern Community,[3] The Status System of a Modern

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[1]Stephen J. Knezevich, Administration of Public Education, Second Edition, New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969, p. 469.

[2]Robert S. and Helen Merrill Lynd, Middletown, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929 and Middletown in Transition, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1937.

[3]W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, The Social Life of a Modern Community, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941.

Community,[4] The Social System of American Ethnic Groups,[5] The Social System of a Modern Factory,[6] and The Living and the Dead.[7]

Warner and his associates used a methodological and conceptual approach that had little to say about power relationships in the community. However, many aspects of community power appeared in the studies and had definite relationship to the class structure under investigation. A degree of business oriented upper middle class dominance was reported in support of the earlier Lynd findings. In Yankee City the Warner group noted an apparent coalition between adjacent classes with the dominance on the part of the upper classes depending upon close relationship with the upper middle classes.

As have others, Polsby questioned the concept of continuous solidarity of the upper classes and speculated as to possible results of a split among these classes.[8] Nevertheless, the Warner studies and conclusions are important for at least three basic reasons: (1) They clearly depicted the impact of shifting ownership and managership functions from "locals" to "outsiders" in a highly industralized community; (2) they developed the well-known classification system for the various social class, economic status and other components of Yankee City, and (3) they supported earlier conclusions that people of high socioeconomic status are influential.

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[4]W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, The Status System of a Modern Community, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942.

[5]W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Strole, The Social System of American Ethnic Groups, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945.

[6]W. Lloyd Warner and J. O. Low, The Social System of a Modern Factory, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947.

[7]W. Lloyd Warner, The Living and the Dead, New York: Yale University Press, 1959.

[8]Nelson W. Polsby, Community Power and Political Theory, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963, p. 28.

Two separate but concurrent studies were made of Morris, a small town in Illinois. These studies were conducted in the 1930's and early 1940's. Warner called the community "Jonesville" and described power relations as a product of what he perceived as the community's distinct social cleavage.[9] Similar observations about Morris, Illinois also are expressed in the book, Who Shall Be Educated?, with W. Lloyd Warner as a co-author.[10]

Hollingshead referred to Morris as "Elmtown" and specifically centered his efforts around the town's high school. Among the significant observations was that social status of the student's family had much to do with a student's school attendance record, athletic participation, and academic performance. A similar relationship was noted between social status and the manner in which the pupil was disciplined.[11]

In his Elmtown study, Hollingshead also dealt with the question of community control. He quoted an informant who emphatically stated that control in Elmtown was "an aristocracy of wealth and nothing else."[12] Hollingshead also stressed the conservatism of this aristocracy or inner group whose ownership of property brought about much resistance to taxes. Because this group was interested in low assessments and taxes, control of the two major political party organizations in the township and on the county level appeared to be the natural thing for these upper class individuals.[13]

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[9] W. Lloyd Warner, et. al., Democracy in Jonesville, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949, p. 101.

[10] W. Lloyd Warner, Robert J. Havighurst, and Martin Loeb, Who Shall Be Educated? New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944.

[11] August B. Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth, New York: John Wiley and Company, 1949.

[12] Ibid., pp. 82-83.

[13] Ibid., p. 86.

The considerations of power in American communities discussed so far primarily were the work of sociologists. These sociologists were stratification analysts who tended to see a stratified society in which a socio-economic elite dominated local politics. These scholars analyzed social stratification patterns through interviews with all the adult population in a given city. In Yankee City, for example, a community of 17,000 was divided into six classes, and behavior patterns were studied in each of the classes. Participation in groups as reported by acquaintances was used as the main criterion for determination of social classification. This is what has come to be known as "the Warner Approach."

Basically, the Warner approach to social stratification was anthropological. In this approach, the investigation attempts to delineate the culture and social structure of an entire society. It is an analysis of the social organization of a community in terms of "its constituent sub-groupings each of which is called a social structure."[14] As described by Bendix, the theory governing such studies was one holding that affiliation with or membership in a group created a homogeneity of belief and action. Theoretically, then, this homogeneity would lead to concerted, collective political action.[15]

The majority of American community studies prior to 1950 used methods similar to those of Warner, Lynd and Lynd, and Hollingshead. The Warner

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[14]Ruth Rosner Kornhauser, "The Warner Approach to Social Stratification," in Richard Bendix and Seymour M. Lipset (Eds.), Class, Status and Power: A Reader in Social Stratification, Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press Division of the Crowell-Collier Publishing Co., 1953, p. 225.

[15]Richard Bendix, "Social Stratification and Political Power," in Bendix and Lipset (Eds.), Ibid., p. 600.

approach seemed to be the most common methodology employed.

A few other stratification studies analyzing class systems and effects of class structure on control of the community were "Old City,"[16] "Black Metropolis,"[17] "Plainsville, U.S.A.,"[18] Bell's study in a small Iowa town,[19] and "Philadelphia Gentlemen,"[20] based on 1940 observations. All reported definite social stratification with evidence of community dominance primarily on socioeconomic criteria.

The Reputational Approach

The work in Middletown and the development of the Warner approach to stratification marked the beginning of emphasis on the study of community power in America. The Middletown books, in particular, were the focal points of the early period in the study of power. Floyd Hunter, who dealt specifically with power structure, has dominated the contemporary scene, just as the Lynds were so important to the earlier era.

Hunter is a sociologist whose approach to the study of community power structure evolved directly from stratification study methodology.

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[16]Allison Davis, Burleigh Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, Deep South, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941.

[17]St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, Black Metropolis, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1945.

[18]James West, Plainsville, U.S.A., New York: Columbia University Press, 1945.

[19]Earl H. Bell, "Social Stratification in a Small Community," Scientific Monthly (February, 1934), pp. 157-164, cited by R. Lynn Smith, The Sociology of Rural Life, Revised Edition, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947, pp. 358-360.

[20]E. Digby Baltzell, Philadelphia Gentlemen, Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958.

He authored or co-authored three books on the subject of power. These books were, Community Power Structure,[21] Community Organization: Action and Inaction,[22] and Top Leadership, U.S.A.,[23] with all three enjoying wide acceptance by sociologists. Community Power Structure, Hunter's first book on the subject of power, was particularly well received and favorably reviewed, and the methodology described has had many imitators.

The Hunter method, popularly known as "the reputational approach," is a modification of stratification methodology. Hunter modified stratification research procedures by utilizing sampling techniques. He employed a reputational method of interviewing as opposed to the earlier practice of interviewing all available adults in a specific community. Simply stated, his method consisted of contacting people in positions of influence. These were people reputed to be leaders, and these "experts" then were asked for nominations of individuals whom they considered influential in the community.

In Community Power Structure, Hunter reported findings from his study of power and influence in Atlanta, Georgia, which he called "Regional City." After the panel selected forty influentials, lengthy interviews were conducted. Each interviewee was asked to choose the

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[21]Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953.

[22]Floyd Hunter, Ruth Conner Schaffer, and Cecil B. Sheps, Community Organization: Action and Inaction, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956.

[23]Floyd Hunter, Top Leadership, U.S.A., Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959.

top five from the list of forty with the provision that additional names not on the list could be added. Questions were asked about the influentials and two specific and recent local issues with conclusions based on the interviews, personal observations, and news accounts of the men.[24]

Hunter concluded that the power structure in Atlanta was pyramidal in shape and best could be described as monolithic because of the small, single group that make up the real power elite. According to Hunter, these powerful men ran the affairs of Regional City, and admission to the inner circle of power was based on position in the business, financial, service, labor, and governmental communities.[25]

In effect, the power of decision-making for Atlanta seemed concentrated within a handful of men who had gained control of the city's industrial, commercial, and financial interests. The real power structure was informal, and formal interest groups did not seem to wield much power. Public officials and leaders in the organized groups were subservient to the will of the power elite. This seemingly represented almost absolute control by the men at the top of the pyramid and is illustrative of what Kimbrough has described as a "monopolistic power structure."[26]

Floyd Hunter's contributions probably are the most significant of all such efforts in the power structure field. His sociology-based

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[24]Hunter, Community Power Structure, op. cit., p. 61, 269.

[25]Ibid., p. 69.

[26]Ralph B. Kimbrough, Administering Elementary Schools, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968, pp. 70-73.

philosophy viewed the community as a system of action in which power not only existed but consisted of social rather than physical action. Interpersonal relations thus were considered as most important. Because of its wide acceptance, Hunter methodology has been used by many power structure researchers, and today it remains popular as a technique for studying a community's power and influence patterns. Hunter, however, has not been without his critics with political scientists in the forefront of dissent as to method and findings.

Reputational Critiques

The most prominent opposition to the methodology and findings of Floyd Hunter and other reputational power elite-oriented sociologists has come from the ranks of the those who advocate a "pluralistic" approach to the analysis of community power relationships. The pluralistic philosophy, developed primarily by political scientists, frequently is in direct contradiction to the sociological viewpoint expressed by Hunter.

The first really public and specific criticism of Hunter's work came in 1954. In a review of Hunter's Community Power Structure, Kaufman and Jones offered a summary of the Atlanta method and findings and then concentrated on methodological criticisms.[27] This critical review contributed much that later was incorporated into the pluralistic point of view. However, it should be pointed out that the criticisms

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[27]Herbert Kaufman and Victor Jones, "The Mystery of Power," book review of Community Power Structure by Floyd Hunter, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953, Public Administration Review, Vol. 14, Summer, 1954, pp. 205-212.

were by analysis and were not the result of a follow-up study in which empirical data could be presented.

Kaufman and Jones' major criticism was that Hunter made an a priori assumption as to the existence of a power elite. He attempted to describe an elite when its presence was the major point to be established.[28] This a priori assumption charge has been the one most frequently leveled at Hunter.

As previously indicated, Robert Dahl personifies the pluralistic school of thought which is dichotomous to Floyd Hunter's reputational power elite approach. Press cited Harry Scoble's report of "Yankeetown" findings as "the first detailed criticisms of the reputational approach by a student of Dahl."[29] Scoble claimed that reputational analyses (1) present only "static portraits" of leaders, (2) assume horizontal substructuring of leadership, and (3) provide no external evidence of tests of power but depend solely on subjective judgments.[30]

Form and Sauer suggested that Hunter's analysis ignored the broader organizational context of the community. They believed that it would be possible for various formal, organized groups to have power even though such groups were unrepresented in local elites. These writers questioned, as have others, whether the power elite really formed a unified clique. They also wondered if elite members themselves had accurate perceptions of the local power arrangements.[31]

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Charles Press, Main Street Politics: Policy-Making at the Local Level, East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1962, p. 47.

[30] Ibid., pp. 47-48.

[31] William H. Form and Warren L. Sauer, "Organized Labor's Image of Community Power Structure," Social Forces, Vol. 38, May, 1960, pp. 332-334.

Several writers have questioned Hunter's picture of monolithic control in Regional City. Among the most frequently voiced criticisms were:

1. Hunter confused potential power with actual power.
2. He failed to examine the role of economic dominants in the actual resolution of community issues.
3. He assumed that crucial decision-makers remained the same from issue-area to issue-area.[32]

The critical comments enumerated above frequently have been expressed by the pluralists as was the charge that nominations based upon reputation could lead to the identification of reputed rather than actual power-wielders. The oft-discussed problem of distinguishing between power and status also has been mentioned by the pluralists who have alleged that reputational methodology failed to make this distinction. Some have suggested that citizen-panels usually do not have adequate knowledge about actual power systems.

Other commonly-voiced criticisms of Hunter's work included:

1. Hunter did not show the degree to which an elite controls rather than merely cooperates with the forces of tradition, custom, or circumstances.
2. He did not consider the importance of feedback in power relations (the influencer himself could be influenced by the reactions he perceives).
3. Hunter assumed that a decision, which really is a process rather than an act, goes into effect when it is announced (he overlooked the shaping of a decision that occurs in its implementation).

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[32]Stephen P. Hencley, "The Study of Community Politics and Power," in Robert S. Cahill and Stephen P. Hencley (eds.), The Politics of Education in the Local Community, Danville, Illinois: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1964, Chapter I.

Floyd Hunter's statements regarding what he termed the "substructure" in Atlanta have been taken to task in the literature. "Substructure", in the Hunter terminology, primarily referred to the city's "Black Community". Critics felt that Hunter ignored the influence of the substructure and emphasized only its submissive aspects. Thus, it is possible that he presented a somewhat pluralistic society as a monolith.[33]

Dahl and two of his students, Polsby and Wolfinger, have offered extensive critiques of the reputational-panel methodology and resultant findings. Discussion of a few of these criticisms will be presented under the heading, "the pluralistic approach."

The Pluralistic Approach

Extensive usage and analysis of the reputational approach to the study of community power and influence resulted in much discussion and some criticism and refutation of the methodology. The various critiques, coming primarily from political scientists, contributed significantly to the development of a new power research philosophy. The new approach has come to be known as the "pluralistic approach" or the "pluralistic school of thought."

As noted previously, due to publication of his Atlanta findings, Floyd Hunter, a sociologist, became the personification of the reputational school. Robert Dahl, a political scientist, has earned recognition as Hunter's counterpart among the pluralists. Identification as the pluralistic spokesman came about through Dahl's report of conclusions

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[33]Kaufman and Jones, loc. cit.

in a study of the power structure of New Haven, Connecticut.[34]

Three years prior to completion of the New Haven study Dahl presented a critique of ruling elite theories, which he claimed were untestable. He listed three tests common to reputational methodology and contended that all three were improper for determining whether a power elite existed. These tests included: (1) Identification of those with potential control, if they acted in concert (which they may not do), (2) identification of those who merely have more influence than others, and (3) generalization of influence on the basis of influence wielded in one area. Dahl proposed that issues on which there was disagreement between the hypothetical elite and others be observed and the outcome examined and subjected to empirical test.[35]

Nelson Polsby, a Dahl student and member of the New Haven research team, advocated issue analysis as the best approach to power structure research. He doubted that policy is distributed throughout the community so that power wielders remain the same from issue to issue. He charged that the reputational technique's failure to specify issues gave respondents an opportunity to have any of several types of leadership in mind when naming an elite. Polsby recognized that intentions of assumed power holders, reputation, and attributions of power to certain individuals could lead to important insights into power-influence situations. He insisted, however, that it is necessary to combine intentions, reputation,

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[34]Robert A. Dahl, Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.

[35]Robert A. Dahl, "A Critique of the Ruling Elite Model," American Political Science Review, Vol. 52, June, 1958, pp. 463-469.

and attributions with observation of behavior. The specific observed behavior to which he had reference was that involved in the community decision-making process.[36]

Raymond Wolfinger, another Dahl student and research team member, presented a critical examination of reputational methodology. As did Polsby, he stressed the difficulty of transferring a position of power from one activity to another. Wolfinger pointed out, too, that respondents were likely to confuse status with power. Additional weaknesses cited included:

1. Decision-makers failed to identify other decision-makers.
2. Arbitrary cutoffs were used, because it was necessary to set limits on the size of the elite.
3. Questions as to the degree of cohesiveness or competiveness among power figures presented difficulties.
4. The studies assumed power distribution to be static rather than subject to dramatic changes.[37]

The various critiques offered by Dahl, his students, and other political scientists have formed the basis of the pluralistic philosophy and approach. In particular, one indictment of reputational method and findings has seemed fundamental to the political science-based pluralistic theory. This is a statement by Polsby in which he alleged that "a power structure is genuine to these researchers (reputationalists) only if they discover big businessmen in it."[38] Indeed, political scientists have been extremely

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[36]Nelson W. Polsby, "The Sociology of Community Power: A Reassessment," Social Forces, Vol. 37, March, 1959, pp. 232-236.

[37]Raymond E. Wolfinger, "Reputation and Reality in the Study of Community Power," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 25, October, 1960, pp. 636-644.

[38]Polsby, Community Power and Political Theory, op. cit., p. 66.

critical of sociologists who apparently regard community politics as a subsidiary aspect of social structure and see the businessman as a dominant in local power and influence relationships.

Scholars in political science have denied that a single group must dominate the community, and as pluralists, they have looked at interest groups and leadership roles rather than hierarchy. Businessmen are seen as primarily interested in the business section, and unless proven otherwise, do not necessarily run the community's affairs. Analysis of specific issues is the methodology employed by pluralists with emphasis on the study of degrees of participation by the individuals actually involved in the various issue areas. Dahl's study of power in New Haven, Connecticut provided an excellent example of the pluralist's approach in which society was viewed as an aggregate of self-interest motivated individuals rather than a pyramid of power elite or a power configuration.

The New Haven Study

The question asked in the New Haven study was: -- In a political system where nearly every adult may vote but where knowledge, wealth, social position, access to officials, and other resources are unequally distributed, who actually governs? Simply stated, the question was: -- Given the existence of inequalities, who really governs in a democracy?

The major purpose of the study was to analyze various events related to the making and executing of public policy in several issue areas. The basic idea was to identify participants in policy-making and describe their roles. The intention was to arrive at some understanding of normal policy-making in each issue area and to compare these findings with conventional theories of policy-making. According to Polsby, these conventional

theories also attempted to describe who participates and how, with a prominent example of such theories being the ruling elite concept.[39]

Urban redevelopment, public education, and nominations in the two major political parties were issue areas selected for analysis. They were chosen because they promised to cut across a wide variety of interests and participants. Events leading up to a proposal for and rejection of a new city charter also were examined in detail. Except for political nominations, all decisions that participants in the various issues regarded as most important since 1950 were studied in depth. Examination of nominations was extended back to 1941 in order to include a large enough number for meaningful analysis.[40] Event participants in each issue area were identified by studying newspapers and public documents. Wolfinger, a member of the research team, observed events from a position close to the Mayor and the Development Administrator.

In addition to study of documents, records and newspapers, decisions were reconstructed by means of forty-six persons who had been active participants in one or more key decisions. Original interviews were up to six hours in length, and some of the decision participants were re-interviewed several times. Dahl reported that "the impression of the interviewers, fortified by cross-checking among the interviews and other sources of information, was that most of the persons interviewed were remarkably candid."[41] He added, however, that those interviewed did not

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[39] Ibid., p. 70

[40] Dahl, Who Governs?, op. cit., p. 333.

[41] Ibid., p. 45.

always display accurate memories.[42] One team member's internship in the Mayor's office apparently provided additional opportunities to check the validity of interviews and obtain other background information.

"Social Notables" and "Economic Notables" were studied in New Haven. Dahl commented that in earlier days when birth, wealth, education, and office were joined, it was not difficult to determine a person's social standing. As these resources have separated, it has become a much more complex task.[43]

Consequently, one basic criterion was used to identify the Social Notables. The symbol of membership in New Haven's upper class was an invitation to the annual "Assemblies" held at the New Haven Lawn Club. The invitation lists for 1958 and 1959 were used, as was a similar list for 1951. Those who had been invited were designated Social Notables, with the 1951 list arbitrarily selected for use so that members of an older but still active Social Notables could be included. Approximately 150 families were invited each year, but because of social continuity over the years, it was found that a total of 231 families had been invited during the three selected years.

Dahl's Economic Notables classification included any person in any of the following categories:

1. The president or chairman of a corporation with property in New Haven assessed in any of the five years 1953-57 at a value placing it among the fifty highest assessments in the city.

2. Any individual or group of individuals with property in the city assessed in the years 1953-57 at a value of $250,000 or more.

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., p. 63.

3. President or chairman of the board of any bank or public utility in the city.

4. Any individual who was a director of three or more of the following: A firm with an assessed valuation of $250,000, or more, a manufacturing firm with fifty employees, or more, a retailing firm with twenty-five employees, or more, a bank.

5. All directors of New Haven banks.[44]

Coincidentally, after duplications were eliminated, the Economic Notables numbered 238 persons, a figure almost equal to the 231 Social Notables. This did not mean, however, that the two groups were substantially identical, because only four persons, or about five percent of the total names on both lists, were both Social and Economic Notables.

Observations from the New Haven research indicated that Economic Notables participated more in public affairs than did the Social Notables. The Economic Notables more frequently held some type of office, but they too tended to avoid political and public education offices.

Dahl concluded that the modern Social and Economic Notables did not constitute a ruling elite in New Haven. He recognized, though, that these Notables frequently were influential on specific decisions, particularly when such decisions directly involved business prosperity.[45]

The most striking characteristic of influence in New Haven was the extent to which this influence was specialized. It seemed that those individuals influential in one sector of public activity tended not to be influential in another area, a finding in direct opposition to the power pyramid concept. Of equal significance was the evidence that the social strata from which influentials in one sector tended to come differed from

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[44] Ibid., pp. 67-68.

[45] Ibid., p. 84.

the strata from which influentials in other sectors were drawn. With this observation, the pluralists' absolute rejection of reputational-prestige methods of investigation, based upon modifications of stratification methodology, became complete.

The New Haven researchers concluded that the city had passed through a transformation from a system in which resources of influence were highly concentrated to a system in which they are highly dispersed. It was indicated, however, that the dispersion represented fragmentation rather than equality of resources. In Dahl's words, "the revolution in New Haven might be said to constitute a change from a system of cumulative inequalities to a system of noncumulative or dispersed inequalities in political resources."[46]

The power pyramid idea thus was repudiated, according to the view of the pluralists who saw participation based upon interest in the various issue areas. The two schools of thought did find one point of commonality, though. They would agree that a great body of citizens have little voice in a community's affairs, but they differ as to the reasons. The reputational advocates stressed the idea of an elite power pyramid whose members were in control. The pluralistic school of thought concluded that most do have at least some influence resources; yet, these resources are very unequally distributed. Also, to Dahl and the pluralists, most citizens do not even use the resources they possess; therefore, there is a great gap between actual and potential influence. This is the phenomenon described by Dahl as "slack in the use of resources."[47]

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[46] Ibid., p. 228.

[47] Ibid., p. 306.

Issue Analysis Limitations

Issue analysis, as the basic research tool for the pluralistically-oriented community power researcher, actually is a case study technique. Thus, the basic weakness of case methodology applies to issue analysis.

Reiss, among many others, has clearly set forth the fundamental weakness of case-issue methods for analyzing the community. He noted that such efforts simply were case studies without variables common to more than one study.[48] Obviously, this means that findings in one community cannot be uncritically applied to all other communities at all other times. In other words, it is not possible to generalize findings from one community to other communities.

It also has been suggested that influence systems may not only vary with the type of community but also may vary with issues. The same writers have been critical of the use of reputationally selected panels of experts to identify issues for analysis. They argue that researchers probably will find a monolithic power structure if they select only issues mentioned by those considered the potential elite.[49]

Criticism of his own issue analysis methodology was expressed by Banfield. He felt that his attention to issues that were controversial diverted attention from what was not controversial and even from what was not actively controversial. It, therefore, could be possible that important issues in Chicago did not come under scrutiny in Banfield's study of that

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[48]Albert J. Reiss, Jr., "Some Logical and Methodological Problems in Community Research," Social Forces, Vol. 33, October, 1954, pp. 51-57.

[49]Ernest A. T. Barth and Stuart D. Johnson, "Community Power and a Typology of Social Issues," Social Forces, Vol. 38, October, 1959, pp. 29-32.

city, because these issues were not in the headlines.[50]

Obviously, the decision-making process is extremely complex. The fact that issue analysis (case study) as a method of research deals with cases involving individual decisions has been cited as a weakness in the methodology. According to this reasoning, the weakness stems from factors in addition to the complications inherent in decision-making. Close scrutiny of decisions tends to illuminate the issues and actions at a given point only and provides a very insecure basis for general conclusions about decision-making behavior.[51] The results of such methodology well might be lack of comparability in issues, participants, and timing in findings and conclusions. Generalization from these findings thus could cause serious errors in interpretations.

Failure to identify and consider the roles of informal or behind the scenes participations could act as limitations in the issue analysis techniques. Also, Sayre and Kaufman believed that it would be easier to determine what people could accomplish through political action than it is to see what really motiviates them to become involved.[52] Complicated questions as to motivation for involvement and participation in various

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[50]Edward C. Banfield, Political Influence, New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961, p. 9.

[51]Roscoe C. Martin, Frank J. Munger, et al., Decisions in Syracuse: A Metropolitan Action Study, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Anchor Books Edition, 1965, pp. 17-19.

[52]William S. Sayre and Herbert Kaufman, Governing New York City, Philadelphia: Russell Sage Foundation, William F. Fell Co., Printers, 1960.

issues thus can be added to the list of limitations of issue analysis-case study methods. Reiss mentioned several additional possible errors in case studies of communities. He suggested that such analyses viewed problems as having the same elements on the societal and the community level. He charged that the community usually was seen as a closed causal system without any noticeable attempt at spelling out external relations. He felt that scholars who approached community study through case and issue analysis assumed that by studying simple forms more complex forms could be understood. Reiss wondered, too, if the problematic aspects of change were being ignored and if researchers erroneously were assuming that properties of the whole apply to all the parts.[53] Again, such comments can be interpreted as criticism of the degree of generalizable findings supplied by the issue analysis-case study techniques.

Summary

School distircts, as political and legal entities, civil sub-divisions of the state, and quasi-municipal corporations, have been provided with considerable operating automony. Boards of Education are policy-formulating bodies and generally have powers and responsibilities allowing them to function somewhat independently. Yet, many different kinds of pressures are applied in the educational decision-making process. Schools, in fact, are immersed in politics. Pressures are exerted from state and national sources, and today there are myriad pressures emanating at the local level.

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[53] Reiss, loc. cit.

These political factors, particularly at the local level, have brought growing recognition of community power and influence considerations in the governance and administration of the public schools.

For the various reasons cited, the multitude of studies of community power structure and influence patterns should be important to educational administrators. These community analysis research endeavors have resulted in two rather dichotomous views of power and influence at the community level. Both are important to school administration.

The two approaches and philosophies are known as "reputational" and "pluralistic" and stem primarily from the work of Floyd Hunter, a sociologist, and Robert Dahl, a political scientist. Dahl's pluralistic philosophy developed from critiques of Hunter's reputational methodology and findings. The Hunter or reputational approach has its roots in the work of stratificationists such as Robert and Helen Merrill Lynd, W. Lloyd Warner, Robert Havighurst, and August Hollingshead.

Stratification analysts centered their efforts on social stratification or level and its effects on man's social and environmental relationships with his fellows. These researchers, working primarily in the 1920's, 30's, and early 40's, interviewed all available adults in a given community. Findings from the various studies seemed to agree that:

1. The upper class rules in community life, and there is much class solidarity.
2. Political and civic leaders are subordinate to the upper class.
3. A single power elite rules in the community.

4. A coalition exists between adjacent classes with upper class dominance dependent upon close relationships with the upper middle classes.

5. The upper class power elite rules in its own interests.

A majority of community studies prior to 1950 used methodologies similar to those of the stratificationists. In fact, approaches such as those employed by Warner and the Lynds marked the beginning of real emphasis on the study of community. The Lynds' Middletown books, in particular, were focal points in the early community studies.[54]

Floyd Hunter, a sociologist who dealt specifically with power structure and influence patterns, has dominated the contemporary scene, just as Robert and Helen Lynd were so important to the earlier era. Hunter's approach evolved directly from stratification study methodology in that he modified stratification research procedures by utilizing sampling techniques. His report of his Regional City (Atlanta) study was extremely well-received, and the methodology described has been widely imitated.[55]

The Hunter method of investigation (the reputational approach) consisted of contacting persons in positions of influence. Those contacted were reputed to be leaders. They were asked to serve on an "expert panel" or "jury" to nominate individuals considered influential in the community.

The Atlanta "panel" selected forty reputed influentials, and lengthy interviews were conducted. Based upon interview findings, personal observations and news accounts of the reputationally identified influentials,

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[54]See Middletown and Middletown in Transition, loc. cit.

[55]Hunter, Community Power Structure, op. cit., pp. 1-271.

Hunter concluded that a small group of men made up a power elite which ran the affairs of Atlanta, Georgia. According to Hunter, Atlanta's power structure was pyramidal in shape and best could be described as monolithic because of the small, single group making up the power elite. He reported, too, that admission to the inner circle of power was based upon position in the business, financial, service, labor, and governmental communities.

Extensive use, imitation, and analysis of the reputational approach to community power and influence study resulted in discussion, criticism, and even some refutation of the methodology. The most serious criticism came from the ranks of political scientists and evolved into a new power research philosophy referred to as "the pluralistic school of thought."

Dahl's research in New Haven, Connecticut provided a prime example of the pluralistic philosophy in which society is viewed as an aggregate of self-interest motivated individuals rather than a pyramid of power elite.[56]

The major purpose of the Dahl Study was to analyze various events related to the making and executing of public policy in several issue areas. The basic idea was to identify participants in policy-making and describe their roles. The intention was to arrive at some understanding of normal policy-making in each issue area and to compare these findings with conventional theories of policy-making such as those espoused by Hunter.

Three principal events were analyzed in New Haven. Event participants in each issue area were identified by studying newspapers and public

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[56]Dahl, Who Governs, op. cit., pp. 1-325.

documents, and lengthy interviews and reinterviews were held with the participants. Thus, decisions were reconstructed by means of forty-six persons who had been selected as active participants in one or more key decisions. One research team member's internship in the Mayor's office apparently provided opportunities to check the validity of interviews and obtain other background information. Dahl and his colleagues concluded that New Haven's "Social and Economic Notables" did not constitute a ruling elite. It was conceded, however, that the "Notables" could be influential on specific decisions, particularly when such decisions directly involved business prosperity.

It would appear that the most striking characteristic of influence in New Haven was the extent to which this influence was specialized. In other words, those individuals influential in one sector of public activity tended not to be influential in another area. This finding is in direct opposition to Hunter's power pyramid concept.

The New Haven researchers also concluded that the city had passed from a system of concentrated resources of influence to one in which these resources are highly dispersed. However, this dispersion seemed to represent fragmentation rather than equality of resources. The power pyramid or configuration idea, therefore, was thoroughly repudiated by the pluralists who perceived participation as being based primarily upon interest in specific issue areas. Pluralists and reputationalists agree, though, that a great body of citizens have little voice in a community's affairs, but they differ as to the reason. Hunter advocates stress the idea of an elite power pyramid in control of the community's activities.

Dahl supporters, on the other hand, cite what has been termed, "Slack in the use of resources."

As has reputational methodology, issue analysis as a case study technique for community power structure study has been subjected to some criticism. However, Hunter's reputational method and issue analysis persist as the principal techniques for studying power and influence at the local community level.

In summary, reputational and pluralistic methods of community analysis differ, and findings, conclusions, and philosophies frequently are at variance. Reputationalists usually find an economic dominated power elite. They picture a community's power and influence structure as pyramidal in shape with the power elite forming a monolithic power pyramid. Thus, only a select few run the affairs of the community. The pluralists assume that influence is somewhat specialized and that people act primarily in areas of major interest. Consequently, according to the pluralistic point of view, no single group dominates the community. In fact, those influential in one sector of public activity tend not to be influential in another area. Both schools of thought agree on one fundamental point, however. Very few citizens actually participate in the community's decision-making processes.

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